

When Richard Nixon called Gerald Ford's home to offer him the vice presidency in 1973, Ford asked Nixon to hold on while he asked his wife to pick up an extension phone. Who started the rumor that he also consulted Betty before taking over the presidency?

At a press conference during which he chastised the media for ignoring Richard Nixon's memoirs, Grosset & Dunlap editor Bob Markel suggested reporters pay some attention to the historical anecdotes in the book. For example, said Markel, consider the moment when Nixon called Ford into the Oval Office to tell him he was resigning. Nixon is supposed to have counseled Ford to choose his own cabinet, though he stressed Henry Kissinger should be retained at all costs. Nixon, Markel said, noticed that Ford seemed rather distant, as if he wasn't hearing what was being said. Nixon asked if something was wrong, and Ford is supposed to have said, "Dick, I have to check with Betty first." But, strangely, nowhere in Nixon's memoir, *RN*, does that story appear. The managing editor at Grosset & Dunlap said he couldn't explain the origin of the story, and Markel was on vacation and could not be reached for comment.



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Bob Markel